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# USDA Inside Information

United States Department  
of Agriculture

Office of Governmental  
and Public Affairs

Washington D.C.  
20250

Vol. 2

No. 34

July 4, 1980

## A FIRECRACKER ISSUE

The fact that we have an energy campaign overview in this issue doesn't necessarily have any relationship with the date. But you'll also find items about a radio news service becoming a public call-in service...a Missouri study on inf needs...grasshopper control plans...Medfly worries...an alcohol fuel update from Texas...and even a couple of job opportunities. All in all, this may be a firecracker issue after all...there might even be a few sparklers for you.

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## GETTING ON LINE

If you followed the news last week...and early this week...you saw stories about some TV dinners and other quick service foods that had to be recalled because of contamination with dieldren. One complication was that each story contained a number of code numbers--about the only way the particular packages could be identified.

Ben Darling, regional inf officer in San Francisco, reports that his office put the story on their radio news service...and listed all the codes. The whole yarn lasted a little more than 5 minutes.

Two San Francisco TV stations gave the radio service telephone number to the general public. So from Friday afternoon late, when the item went on the line, until 8:15 a.m. Monday morning, there were 362 calls to the number. That's a call almost every 10 minutes over the weekend.

Ben planned to do the same thing with the second story...released early this week. No report yet on the outcome of that effort.

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## STILL MEETING...

Next Government Printing Office-Joint Committee on Printing open meeting will be July 24 from 10-4 in New York City. Place will be Room 305 (Senate Committee Hearing Room) at the Federal Bldg., 26 Federal Plaza.

Folks who might attend should respond by July 15 to the GPO Regional Printing Procurement Office, 201 Varick St., 7th Floor, New York 10014, (212) 620-3321, with names, titles and addresses of those who will attend.

The meeting will be the first public meeting held in that area in more than 10 years. Subsequent meetings are planned in

Boston, Columbus, Dallas, Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and Washington, D.C. As we've noted before, a couple or so have already been held this spring.

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#### SWAT THE RASCALS!

When someone mentions the Mediterranean fruit fly, things begin to pop. At least that's what happened a few weeks ago. One male Medfly turned up in Los Angeles. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service folks inspected the area and found larvae in host fruit in the yard next door.

That prompted application of a lure/pesticide combination to host trees...trapping was stepped up and sterile releases were readied to blot out the invaders (the finding of two adults plus the larvae constitutes an official infestation).

Then another incident turned up two flies in a single trap in San Jose. They are suspicious, however, since they are pale-faced flies and lab-reared flies for sterilization are typically pale-faced. It may be a plant...but folks are following up that find even so.

Finally, a third incident in mid-June had to do with three cars traveling with larvae-infested mangoes...the cars were at a New Mexico-Arizona road station called San Simon. Two cars--one from Virginia and one from Florida--had occupants who said they got their fruit in Texas; the third car--from Pennsylvania--had a driver who said the fruit came from Florida.

All this is being checked and rechecked...and APHIS people are shaking their heads.

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#### JUST HOPPING AROUND

Grasshoppers probably will yield their biggest infestation this year in some 20 years...so it now appears. Strange weather has brought a second hatch in the northern Great Plains states... more and more acreages are going to need treatment.

One good thing about Mt. St. Helens--the ash managed to destroy the population that would have hatched nearby. As a result, the big infestations this year appear to be New Mexico, Nebraska, Texas, Wyoming and Montana. No big information programs seem upcoming, but you will be seeing a press release shortly that will explain where and why treatments are necessary.

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#### HANGING ON TO ENERGY

In mid-July, you'll see or hear of a White House ceremony in the news about USDA's actions to encourage energy conservation in rural America.

The plan now being finalized will have three major goals: to encourage farmers to take additional actions to save 5% more energy in the coming year; to encourage adoption of as many conservation practices as possible to reduce other rural energy use by 15%; and to honor individuals, groups, businesses and communities in rural America who've used outstanding practices to conserve energy.

Keep tuned...

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ASK AND YOU GET  
ANSWERS

Maybe you've seen this before, but it was news to us. A Missouri study (Brown and Collins, 1977) found that family farmers had their greatest inf needs in marketing and production technology. Business management and farm policy were less important.

Newspapers, magazines and newsletters were second to consultation with experts as a means of getting inf about marketing. The same for production inf, but drop newsletters and substitute meetings.

The farmers considered marketing firms their best source of marketing inf...farm magazines next, then radio and TV. For production inf, they looked first to extension and universities, then farm magazines.

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SEEN AROUND CAMPUS

From Don Wells, U. of Minnesota, comes a packet of stories put together by Jack Sperbeck and Deedee Nagy about various kinds of research at the university. Then they used the stories as hand-outs for a campus tour of county extension committee members from one of the state's districts.

Don says they borrowed the idea from some press days of recent years but "interestingly, there was no attempt made to write the stories as news stories...they just sort of came out that way." Jack and Deedee also served as tour guides.

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FOR FUEL ALCOHOLICS

Richard Henderson, Texas Dept. of Ag., recently shipped us some fact sheets his department issues called "Alcohol Fuels Update." It pulls inf together from a variety of sources and passes the material along to Texans interested in producing fuel alcohol.

The issues we saw would make grist for some interesting reading... one was a list of tips about engine conversions...another on fuel loans...still another on permits required to make alcohol fuel...and still another with a list of people (and organizations) "in the know" about the subject.

Richard probably will put you on his mailing list if you'll write him at P.O. Box 12847, Austin 78711 or call him at (515) 475-6686.

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WHAT'S TO EAT IN 2000

We're embarrassed that we're so late with this one, for we got the packet of materials in late May. It's a set of releases, speeches and backgrounders from Eldon Fredericks, Michigan State U., relating to an early May conference on "Human Needs in the 21st Century...a planning conference to establish research priorities."

Eldon wrote that about 200 scientists from throughout the country met at Boyne Mountain to discuss the part that food and other products from animals might play in easing human hunger and improving the quality of life during the next century.

If you want the packet--or maybe even parts of it--we betcha Eldon can fix you up. Write him at Dept. of Inf Services, MSU, East Lansing 48824.

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JOB HUNTERS..TRY MD.

Bob Rathbone, U. of Maryland, says he's recruiting again. This time, he's looking for an editor whose main job will be editing agricultural experiment station publications. Pat Caldwell, who has been in the job 4 years (and handled it very well, indeed, Bob says) is "...leaving us to have a baby."

A master's is required...major area of study must be in journalism or a related field. Preference will be given to an individual who has "desirable experience and leadership ability."

If you're interested contact Anne S. Pease, publications specialist, Room 0112, Symons Hall, U. of Md., College Park 20742. Telephone is (301) 454-3624.

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OR TRY ILLINOIS

Illinois was prominent in our minds around "Inside..." headquarters last week...we had calls from Hadley Read, back from an assignment in the Philippines...and a visit from Herb Jackson, Chicago inf officer. Then we got a message from Del Dahl at the U. of Illinois.

Del wrote: Marlene Fritz has moved to Idaho...attached is job description.

The job description advertises for a departmental editor who will provide mass comm support for extension programs in ag and natural resources...identify priorities for comm efforts, develop appropriate educational approaches, prepare materials for print and other inf outlets and conduct evaluative research.

An MS is required...at least 3 years of comm experience. Applicants should be a "good writer" and also be able to think multimedia and plan coordinated comm programs.

Contact Del if interested: 67 Mumford Hall, Urbana 61801 or call him at (217) 333-4780.

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ABOUT THESE JOBS...

Finally, we should note that we're flattered the way people read "Inside..." particularly for job openings. We should point out, however, that "Inside..." is not an official recruiting brochure of USDA. We merely repeat openings we think might be of interest and too often we're late in getting the word to you.

Latest example of this concern was expressed by a young graduate from Kansas State. He's applied three times for USDA positions we've announced and has had his applications returned each time because they were received too late for consideration.

If any of you who are recruiting want to contact him to see if he might meet your needs, write: Ronald G. Reed, 415 East 14th, Ottawa, Kansas 66067.